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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/693,239	10/20/2000	Herbert Howell Waddell	IP-902	8560

7590 02/12/2002

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EXAMINER

PEZZUTO, ROBERT ERIC

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3671

DATE MAILED: 02/12/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/693,239

Applicant(s)

Waddell

Examiner
Robert E PezzutoArt Unit
3671

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on Oct 23, 2001
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

a) All b) Some* c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

- 14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 18) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 16) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 19) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 17) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____ 20) Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones '073 in view of Davis '359. Jones discloses an apparatus for gathering materials (figures 1-15), the apparatus comprising two grasping elements (92,94) each which have shafts (22,24) with grasping means (26,28) at one end. Further, Jones shows the shafts being of 0.5 to 3 inches in diameter and two to six feet in length (as seen in figures 1 and 5) and the grasping means having tines (as best seen in figure 1) but fails to show the coupling means being moveable or flexible. However, Davis teaches that it is well known in the art to connect to implements (figures 1-3) with a relatively moveable coupling means (figure 4). In reference to the claimed limitations of the size of the coupling means and the material from which it is made, these are an obvious matter of design and would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, absent any showing to the

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contrary. Further, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide the apparatus of Jones with the teachings of Davis in order to provide a material gathering apparatus with a greater operational range.

3. In reference to applicant's arguments is the following: As the examiner understands the application for patent, it appears that the applicant's invention is the use of a flexible member to secure two single tools in opposing relationship. However, as displayed by the above references, such a device is extremely well known in this and several other arts. In addition to those mentioned above, the Bricker reference (not used in a rejection but included to show the general state of the art) shows two dissimilar tools (figure 1) jointed for pivoting movement in concert with one another. To further demonstrate the obvious of such a connection means one needs only to walk into the local Chinese restaurant where children are supplied with chopsticks that include a connection device very similar to that as claimed by the applicant to assist them in learning their use. Although a single piece of prior art does not disclose the invention exactly as claimed, it is believed that given the state of the art, the claimed device is very obvious and would be one of many means that one of ordinary skill in the art would solve the stated problems.

4. Applicant's arguments filed October 23, 2001 have been fully considered but they are not deemed to be persuasive. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See M.P.E.P.

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§ 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 C.F.R.

§ 1.136(a).

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR RESPONSE TO THIS FINAL ACTION IS SET TO EXPIRE THREE MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THIS FINAL ACTION. IN THE EVENT A FIRST RESPONSE IS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE MAILING DATE OF THIS FINAL ACTION AND THE ADVISORY ACTION IS NOT MAILED UNTIL AFTER THE END OF THE THREE-MONTH SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD, THEN THE SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD WILL EXPIRE ON THE DATE THE ADVISORY ACTION IS MAILED, AND ANY EXTENSION FEE PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) WILL BE CALCULATED FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THE ADVISORY ACTION. IN NO EVENT WILL THE STATUTORY PERIOD FOR RESPONSE EXPIRE LATER THAN SIX MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THIS FINAL ACTION.

Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Robert Pezzuto at telephone number (703) 308-1012. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Thursday from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time.

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6. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas B Will, can be reached on (703) 308-3870. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-7687



Robert Pezzuto

February 11, 2002